

Boston, Tuesday Evng. Oct. 31. 1848.

My dear Mr. Estlin,

I will at least begin a letter to you, & though I have to
leave off in the middle (as a brother of the Emerald Isle might say), it
shall at least go & thank you for your letter, & assure you of the
pleasure I take in them (and not I alone), and of the satisfaction I
derive from your friendship & counsel. I may not always follow
the latter, but I am sure I never fail to weigh it as carefully as I
can, and to regard it with respect. Many things that we Amer.
Abolitionists say & do must seem very strange in English eyes &
ears. Indeed we do not escape the character at home - with the
worldly-wise, the "prudent", the cautious, the "respectable" - of being
fools, madmen, fanatics, &c. Much more must it be hard to
a staid, regular, cool, English mind to justify all that we say
and do. Nevertheless, I think we shall stand justified in the
great end. Those things which are counted foolishness among
men, we ~~are~~ ^{feel} assured, will be highly exalted & honored in the
course of the Divine Providence. The unsparing rebuke of the
hypocrites, the time-servers, the canting religionists, the Pharisees,
of our age & country (and they are legion) is essential - indispen-
sable to the popular redemption from ^{their} thralldom; equally indis-
pensable to the vindication of Christianity from being a cloak &
support of Slavery. We must, not less, expose false friends,
& those who, under cloak of zeal for God & Humanity, are striving
(from the meanest jealousy & spite) to injure the character of the
true Abolitionists, & of the enterprise which they are striving &
determined, at every peril & sacrifice, to sustain. "If the good is
done, no matter who does it" - sure enough; but the ark will
not go forward now, more than of old, if selfish, malicious, hypocritical
hands are laid upon it.

And although (as it is but a truism to remark) we are liable to judge inaccurately of others, & may sometimes appear more harsh than occasion requires, yet it is to be considered on the other side that such men as Garrison, Phillips & Quincy are in just the position to understand these ^{& conceal} open enemies the best, that they have had great experience in the business, and moreover that the accuracy of their judgments has been remarkably verified, in time past, by subsequent events. — I shall be sorry certainly if Mr. Geo. Harris is aggrieved & alienated by Mr. Quincy's remarks. I most entirely think that he would not knowingly give "aid & comfort" to the pro-slavery ^{side}; but he certainly did that thing, and has tolerably well pleased the men who would like few earthly things so well as to see the Abolitionists here utterly routed and annihilated. I had always heard of Mr. Harris as a fast friend of the anti-slavery cause; as such I obtained a letter of introduction to him when I went to England. Unfortunately he was absent from Edinburgh (where he was then established) when I was in that city. Mr. Garrison ~~was~~ became much attached to him, while abroad. I cannot believe otherwise than that Mr. Harris means to stand on the right side in this controversy; but I cannot fail to see that some sinister influence has had a measure of influence on his mind. We must reach the point when it will not be accounted abusive to affix as strong an epithet to ~~the~~ man who steals a man, as to him who steals a horse, or sheep; and, by parity of reasoning, to him who justifies, excuses, winks at, or "fraternizes" the former, as well as to the accomplice of the horse-thief, the forger, latter the horse-thief, & the like. And then we must go farther and plant ourselves on the only true & firm ground, where the ^{original} ~~same~~

of the former character is regarded as inexplicably vile and worse than the latter, and just in that proportion that "a man is better than a beast." But I must stop for that topic, or I shall not even reach the middle of my story.

I expect to send this by a Dorsetshire gentleman (of Bridport) who sails ⁱⁿ tomorrow's Steamship - John P. Stephens. I became acquainted with him while in England. I found him a reader & admirer of Dr. Channing, although an "Independent" by connection; & he gave me a copy of the Rev. Mr. Maclellan's edition of Dr. C., which I much valued, & of course keep to this day. Another English gentleman goes out in same ship, who has repeatedly called at our office with a view to see Mr. Garrison; he is a Mr. Bennock, a friend of the Howitts. - I have had no oppⁿ. for conversation with him; but I heard him ^{communicating} ~~eulogizing~~ Mr. H. very warmly, as a man greatly wronged & defrauded, & eulogizing his character, his motives, aims, &c.

Your letter of Oct. 2^d. reached me the 21st. It was several months since I had heard from you. That sent by Mr. Heywood I had ^{not} ~~never~~ received. Six days afterwards, Mr. Heywood came into our office, presented your letter (of Aug. 30.) - also one from you to F. Douglass. Mr. H. stopped but a few moments. He seemed not to have taken a favorable view at all of the British West India movement for Emancipation. I suppose his view is a very common one in Lancashire, among the Cotton spinning, who probably look upon Slavery with the same Complacency and tolerance that our N. England cotton-manufacturers do; - who generally do not care a straw whether Slavery continues or not, and would not lose \$10,000 to prevent its being extended over all Mexico, and all South America to boot. At Mr. Heywood's request I made up a small parcel of Anti Slavery Documents for him, and hoped to have seen him again. At yet I have not. 'T is but 4 days since I first saw him,

The Presidential Contest waxes hotter & hotter; and it is almost idle to attempt to get the ear of people for any other subject. One week from to-day the Election takes place throughout the country. You are, I see, quite "at fault" with regard to an expression I lately used that I thought "an election by the people would be prevented." It is simply this, - that if no one candidate receives a majority of all the votes cast, there is then no election by the people, and the choice devolves upon the House of Representatives of Congress.

This year there are 3 prominent candidates; Zachary Taylor, of the Whig party; Lewis Cass, of the Democratic do; and Martin Van Buren, of the "Free Soil" party, or Party opposed to the extension of slavery over Soil now free. [This last, as a party, goes for maintaining the existing Compromises of the Constitution, as well as the other two; and therefore the old Abolitionists cannot join with them.

I send you a little pamphlet, containing the U. S. Constitution, from which you will see, ^(pp. 12. 24.) if you think it worth while to take the

trouble, how this matter of electing the President stands. In 1825 it happened there was no President chosen by the people;

Genl. Jackson had the most of any one, Mr. Adams (J. 2.) had a party, Henry Clay a party, & Wm. H. Crawford of Georgia the rest; but, in order to a choice, some one must have a majority of all the votes thrown, more than ~~half~~ all the others put together.

This year Mr. Van Buren will, very probably, receive so many votes as to defeat the election of either of the others; in which case the H. of Reps. must vote by States, & choose a President; i.e. in taking such a vote, the members of each State meet by themselves & cast their ballots; the one who has a majority is considered as having the vote of that State. As there are 30 States now, 16 votes would be the least number which could elect a Pres^t in H. of Reps. At the election in 1825 (above referred to) the friends of Mr.

Clay united upon Mr. Adams, & carried him in. - You will notice by the little pamphlet aforesaid that, when the people vote, they do not vote directly; but choose (if they can) electors, who meet, in the several states, cast their votes, & transmit them sealed to Congress.

Possibly I may have ~~blindly~~ made out a blind matter of this business of electing a President. It is, notwithstanding, very simple, when you get the thing clearly before you. - These quadrennial Elections throw the people into a perfect state of intoxication, and they are as incapable of reasoning on the subject as brutes would be. There can be no direct bribery - the offer of money, if known, would invalidate the vote - but there is a system of measures put in operation which has the same effect; men are overawed, or wheedled, or cheated, into doing the very thing they have denounced with loathing. Mr. Garrison today said that he should consider the regular visit of the Asiatic Cholera to our shores, once in 4 years, a much less evil than the Presidential Election is. The former cannot demoralize, & reconcile the mind to lying, fraud & time-serving. This is done by the latter on an enormous scale. - The number of Abolitionists, or other persons, who for conscientious reasons do not vote at all (about which you inquire) is very, very small. The propensity to vote is an absolute mania in this country, and few stop to weigh the moral character of the act. Prove to them, as plain as the nose on their face, that the Constitution is made vile by its guarantees to Slavery, prove to them so that they will acknowledge the thing as perfectly clear, that, by voting, they send a man to go & swear to uphold that Constitution, in all its parts and provisions, & of course that they are responsible for the acts of their organ, & are themselves through him supporting a pro-slavery Constitution & Union; - and 999 of 1000 will go & vote, under that Constitution, the very next day, if it should happen to be an Election day. - There is a sect of religionists in the Middle States, called Covenanters, few in number, who have always consistently refused to vote, or hold any office, under the existing U. S. Constitution, because of its Slavery & War provisions, & its Atheistical character, as they deem it.

They, and a small company, scattered through the Non Slaveholding States, of "old-organized Abolitionists", make up the whole of those who refrain, in principle, from casting a vote.

I have read your remarks upon Ireland with much interest - as also upon the state of Europe generally. Surely, the prospect, for France, is gloomy enough. How old Louis Philippe, and Mons. Guizot, & their adherents are chuckling over the strange work made in their old haunts! Is it impossible to supply the defect in the French character? Are they of necessity so vehement, impulsive, volatile, hasty, headstrong? They seem to learn very slowly. Yet it cannot be denied there is a decided improvement upon the method of doing things there in 1790 & onward. - I read a good part of your last letter to Wendell Phillips. He seemed to enjoy it much, and will be as judicious, as you could desire, in respect to spreading any of the matters you wish to be regarded as private. He is steadily convalescent. He walks out for several hours, now, on pleasant days. Oh! what a mercy & favour it is that he was spared to our cause! I cannot think even of what we should be, without him; - not utterly dismayed & cast down, I trust. - Mr. Garrison, also, has returned to his post, though he has not yet resumed all his labours, being peremptorily forbidden so to do by his physician, Dr. Ruggles. I entirely agree with what you say about the absurdity of supposing a man better qualified to detect & treat disease for being blind! Mr. G. is certainly, in medicine, & in some other matters, exceedingly credulous & prone to quackery. But on a question of morals, of individual or social right, his judgment is almost faultless; it seems to be intuitively true. He appears to be greatly benefitted & invigorated by his 4 months' subjection to Water. He got quite out of patience with the slowness of the process, & the length of his banishment from Boston & the Liberator.

Frederic Douglass arrived in Baton today from Rochester. You inquire about him, the "North Star", & the Rochester Bazaar; and I will endeavour briefly & impartially to reply. I am a warm admirer of Douglass; that I'm sure you have seen in my letters, and also (if you have observed) from my occasional notices of him, & his paper, in the Liberator. I have omitted no opportunity to present him, & the North Star to the readers of the Liberator - & always in the most favourable light. I am not the less sorry, therefore, to hear of his "Complaints" against the Abolitionists of Massachusetts, and do not hesitate to say they are utterly without reason or excuse. No man had ever truer & franker friends than Douglass has in the Massachusetts Abolitionists, and in Mr. Garrison, Mr. Jackson, Quincy, Phillips, the Westons, &c. &c. When he was about establishing his paper they, ~~as~~ as was their manifest duty, told him plainly & fully & most kindly (as I know) their opinion that the move was not a judicious one for him. They knew ^{well} the difficulties, & risks of sustaining an antislavery journal here; he was utterly without experience as the point. They had as much as they could do, straining every nerve, & with the help of the generous British friends, to keep alive the "National antislavery Standard", as well as the Liberator and Penn^a. Freeman, & Ohio Bugle, which I came nearer to supporting themselves; - and they could not let it be understood that they would come forward & back up "the North Star", or any other new paper, when all its capital was gone. They simply could not do it. They did their manifest duty, as I conceive, & acted a most friendly part when they frankly told Douglass of all this. Moreover, in order to give him every opportunity to write & communicate, they said he should have the entire use & control of 2 columns weekly in the Standard, and should receive an Annual Compensation of \$150. for this, even though he wrote no more than 1 column weekly, on an average.

Then he might be assured of at least \$50. a month, as a Lecturer; and his money (the donation of his English friends), safely invested, would yield him at least \$150. more, and would be a little fund for his family, besides, in case of any difficulty. - It was a wise & friendly offer - made with reference to a careful survey of the whole ground, and a thorough knowledge of the exigencies of the cause, as well as of ~~the~~^{its} available means. F. D. thought, however, differently, & established his paper. Thus far it has not supported itself - so we learn from several sources altogether reliable. "Yesterday I was told that the subscribers were about 1500. This is an increase, but not adequate to the paper's support. If Douglass feels sore, he has no right so to feel against the Abolitionists here. It will be natural, perhaps, but not manly or generous in Douglass to cast the blame of his ill-success upon those who aimed to save him from this new consequence. I do not believe we shall have any controversy with Douglass - you need not fear it. The "North Star" is certainly an able paper, & a useful one. The colored people, as Douglass says, alone ought to sustain it, & might do it. But we know that people will not do, dare not do, what they ought to do, to sustain the anti-slavery cause. As regards the Rochester Bazaar, I cannot say much ~~of~~ about it; but I suppose that it will be but a poor market for the valuable articles which may be sent to it. It requires a large place like Boston or N. York to secure a good market, and a good result. Moreover, if it is only to sustain a paper which cannot long live (though this is begging the question) it seems like a dividing & consequent weakening of our strength. But I shall be sincerely sorry to have the "North Star" fail, & trust that it will not. - I understand that the Managers of the Bazaar here desire that articles for the Rochester Bazaar should be sent in boxes separate from those intended for Boston - & think that New York would be the best place to send them; but I think this would make but little difference.

It verges towards midnight, and I must speedily close. — The "Virginia Slave Case" to which you allude was a fiction, & was so understood here always. It originated in a penny paper, of rather extravagant character, called the "Chronotype" — which nevertheless tells some sharp & unwelcome truths sometimes. Though not vrai, it is very vraisemblable. I am sorry its true character should have been mistaken among you. Had you understood, as American readers hereabouts do, the position & ways of the paper where it appeared, you would not have been likely to be misled.

You inquire as to a way of sending small sums of money to America. I doubt if I can advise you well. I should think Harnden's Express afforded a good medium. They send a great deal of money, in sums of 1, 2, 3 pounds & upwards, hence to England & Ireland — the latter particularly Chapman^(London) is frequently sending parcels to Boston — but that you know as well as I. Mr. George Wright of Liverpool, Commission Merchant, would doubtless send anything of the kind to my father's or brother's care here.

I trust we shall receive your Bristol box seasonably, and am glad to ~~see~~^{learn} that you have got the articles ready for exhibition. Again shall we have cause to thank and bless you for your most needed & most valuable aid in prosecuting the Anti-Slavery Cause. It is a good cause, worthy of our labours, worthy of the consecration of our lives, of our heartiest devotion. It is worth living for.

As you^{are} so faithful to your promises, I shall expect to receive your portrait — the engraving — in the coming box.

Wednesday morning, Nov. 1.

The morning is dull, but the Steamer will undoubtedly sail, and I trust that she will go in her. I have given you, after all, a long letter. — Still I feel that I am in arrears to my Bristol correspondents. Long, long ago, you sent me a copy of your "Brief Notice" with the request that I would make some corrections in it, for another Edition. If not too late, I will do so yet. — I have a letter of Mr. James's which I think I have never directly replied to. Still I have you all in mind, whenever I write to one. As to what I have said of Douglass, I have no objection to any candid person's seeing, whichever side he or she may espouse. —

Mr. Richardson of Newcastle writes long letters to Wm. W. Brown, striving to save him from the irreligious course which his Associates generally pursue! Her letters are private, and she desires them to be so, but Brown was compelled to ask our aid in deciphering her long scrawl, for really it cannot be called anything else. She appears to have a vast fund of self-esteem, and talks largely of her own & her husband's labours in the cause. She cannot persuade W. W. B. that there is any Christ, or religion worthy of any respect, in Slaveholders & their Apologists — the latter particularly.

Please remember me respectfully to your daughter, (who is at home by this time I presume) to Mr. Armstrong & his lady, to Miss Carpenter & family, & to Mr. James. As ever, respectfully, Yours Sam^l May Jr.

Have I ever sent you
a little work, called
"Despotism in America".

It is not very recent, but
is an excellent work - by
the author of "Archy Moore".

If I have not, please
inform me, & I shall be
glad to send you one.

"Rankin's Letter," which
I send is one of the
earliest works on Slavery
put forth during the
existing A. S. Enterprise, &
is regarded as a Manual.
Mr. Rankin was a Clergyman
in Virginia.

Mr. May
Oct 31 - 1840

John Bishop Estlin Esq.
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By
John P. Stephens Esq }
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Bristol.
England.